

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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## SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

AMERICAN WAR.—The *Times* newspaper, which was one of the loudest clamourers for this war, now observes, “with deep regret, that it has lingered on, for so many months, without being distinguished by any *memorable stroke*.”—If the inflammatory and malicious writer of that paper already experiences *disappointment*, what will he experience during the months, yea, and, perhaps, the *years*, of this war, which are yet to come? He, when urging on the nation to this enterprise, told them, with the utmost confidence, that, in a *few weeks* after war should be commenced, “the *boasted American navy* would be annihilated.” Not only has that navy not been annihilated, but it has very much increased. It has annihilated some hundreds of our merchant ships, and has defeated several of our ships of war; some of which, after victory over them, gained in the most wonderful manner, it has added to its own number.—It is said, that we are building ships to carry 64 guns, for the express purpose of combating the American frigates. Ours, it seems, are to be called *frigates* also. This is to avoid the *awkwardness* of acknowledging, that our *frigates* are not able to cope with American frigates. Now, if it should happen that one of these new “*frigates*” of ours is beaten and captured by an American frigate, what will then be said? For my part, were it with me to carry on the war, I would, after what has passed, resort to no such perilous expedient as this, but would, at once, send *ships of the line* against those formidable frigates, without making any apology for so doing.—Before the war began, not a word were we told about the formidableness of these frigates. The editors of the *Times* and the *Courier* were only impatient, that these frigates should meet ours upon the sea. They said nothing about their stout decks, and their heavy cannon, and their “great big balls.” But, the moment that the Americans *beat* and *captured* one of our frigates with one of theirs, then we heard

these editors, and even the “undaunted sons of Neptune,” garbed in blue and gold, exclaiming against the *size* of the American frigates and the *number of their crews*! We should have thought of all this before we talked of annihilating the American navy in a few weeks.—The merchants and underwriters are now petitioning the Lords of the Admiralty and the Prince Regent to protect them more effectually against this “*contemptible American navy*,” which, it seems, has already destroyed their property to the amount of millions, and some of the ships of which are said to blockade, in some sort, part of our harbours in England and Ireland, and are capturing our ships within the sight of land.—These gentlemen should have petitioned against *the war*. So far from that, many of them were eager for the war; and, do they think, that they are to enjoy the gratification of seeing the American towns knocked down without paying some little matter for it? That the Admiralty are employing a great many ships and sailors in this war our next year’s taxes and *loans* will fully convince us; but numerous as their ships and sailors are, they are not, and cannot be, sufficient to cover all the ocean.—The farmers, and land-holders, and fund-holders, are sighing for the repeal of taxes; but how are they justified in this wish, when it is well known that, to carry on the war, taxes are absolutely necessary; and when it is also well known, that these persons were, in general, anxious for the war?—Some of them want war to prevent their produce from falling in price; others liked peace with France well enough; but, then, they wished “to give the Yankees a *drubbing*.” Therefore, if to keep up the price of produce, and to give the Yankees a *drubbing*, taxes are wanted, with what decency can these persons expect that taxes will be taken off?—Do we obtain any thing that we want without paying for it, in some way or another? If we want food, or raiment, or houses, or pleasure, do we not expect to pay for them? Can we go to see a play or a puppet show without money? Why, then, are we to expect the greater pleasure of seeing the



Yankees *drubbed*, without *paying* for that too?—The public seem very impatient to see the drubbing begin. The *Times* and the *Courier* have been endeavouring to catertain them for a long while, and until they, as well as the audience, appear exhausted. But is it not reasonable, that the public should, in this case, as well as in all others, put down their money *previously* to the drawing up of the curtain? In a year or two, perhaps, we shall see the drama commence in good earnest. But, is it not enough to be amused with a little dancing and tumbling on the outside *before* we have paid our money?—"Send! Send away," says the eager editor of the *Times*, "Send away a force to *crush* them at once!" But not a word does he say about the *taxes*, necessary to pay for the sending and keeping up of such a force. Our Government is composed of wonderfully clever men; but they are not clever enough to make soldiers walk upon the waters over the Atlantic, nor to enact, at a word, "loaves and fishes" to sustain them after their arrival.—To be able to send that "overwhelming force," of which the *Times* speaks, the Government must have *money*? and, as in all other cases, they must have the money *first*.—In short, it is unreasonable, in the extreme, to expect the war in America to be attended with any very signal result, until we have liberally paid two or three years of taxes.—The assertion is again made, that the American ships are *manned principally with English, Irish, and Scotch*. I find this assertion in the *Morning Chronicle* of the 6th instant. If this were true, as I hope it is not, what a pleasant and honourable fact this war would have brought to light? No other than this: that many of our own seamen, our "gallant tars," the "undaunted sons of Neptune," not only have no dislike to the Americans, but actually have run the risk of being hanged, drawn and quartered, for the sake of fighting in the American service against their own country! If the world believe these accounts, what must the world think of us? During the long war in which France was engaged, no Frenchmen were ever found in arms against their King and country. Some of them, indeed, embodied themselves under foreign banners to fight, as they pretended, at least, for their country, and against those whom they called the usurpers of its Government. But, if these accounts

be true, our countrymen have *voluntarily* gone into the American service to fight against their country, that country being under the legitimate sway of the glorious and beloved House of Brunswick!—The origin of these accounts, so disgraceful to the country, is, probably, the reluctance which our naval officers have to confess defeat at the hands of those Yankees, whom we were so desirous to see *drubbed*. To avoid this painful acknowledgment, it has been asserted, that we have not been beaten by the Yankees, but by our own *brave* countrymen. But here again a difficulty arises; for how comes it to pass, that our own brave countrymen have more success on board of Yankee ships, than on board of our own heart of oak? How comes it to pass, that the men on both sides being of precisely the same race and education, those in the Yankee ships should beat those in "the wooden walls of Old England?" It has been observed, that they fight more desperately, knowing that they fight with *a halter about their necks*. What an aspersion on "the sons of Neptune!" As if the sons of Neptune, the gallant Jack Tars of Old England, wanted a halter round their necks, and the gallows and executioner's knife before their eyes, to make them do more in battle than they are ready to do for the sake of their King and country, and from a sentiment of honour! This is, really, giving a cruel stab to the character of our sailors; but such is the sorry malignity of those who publish these accounts of treasonable practices, that they entirely overlook these obvious inferences, in their anxiety to get rid of the supposition that any thing praise-worthy belongs to the character of the enemy.—If these accounts be true, as I hope they are not, why are not the traitors *tried* and executed? Why are they suffered to remain in the American service? why are they suffered to go on thus, shooting at, boarding, and taking our ships; insulting our gallant officers, and putting our men in irons? why are they not, I ask again, *tried* and *hanged*? why are not their warm bowels ripped out and thrown in their traiterous faces? why are their bodies not cut into quarters, and those quarters placed at the King's disposal?—But, I had forgotten, that before these things can be done, we must *capture* the ships in which they sail! Is there no *other* way of coming at them? It were well if those, whose business it is to enforce the law against state-criminals,



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would fall upon some scheme to reach them. Cannot the Parliament, which has been called *omnipotent*, find out some means of coming at them?—In short, these accounts are a deep disgrace to the country; and, I do hope that the Lords of the Admiralty, who published that eloquent paper, stimulating the sailors to fight against the Americans, will fall speedily upon some means of putting an end to so great a scandal.—I have not time, at present, to enter so fully into the subject of the American war as I shall in my next; but, to the loose observations that I have made, I cannot refrain from adding a word or two on the rupture of the negotiations at Ghent, which is said to have taken place. Who, in his senses, expected any other result? It was manifest, from the moment that Napoleon was removed from France, that the war with America was destined to become a serious contest. There were all sorts of feelings at work in favour of such a war. There was not a single voice (mine only excepted) raised against it. Was it to be supposed, then, that peace would be the work of a few months? Yet this rupture of the negotiations appears to have excited a good deal of surprise, not wholly divested of a small portion of alarm. It was expected that the Yankee-Commissioners would jump at peace on any terms. There were thousands of persons, and well-dressed persons too, who said that the Yankees would not hesitate a moment to *depose* Mr. Madison, and send him to some little uninhabited island. About a fortnight ago, some rifle soldiers were passing my house, in their way from Sussex to Plymouth, to join their corps, bound to America. A serjeant, who was at a little distance behind the party, stopped at my door and asked for some beer. While the beer was drawing, I observed to him, that *Jonathan* must take care now what he was about. "No," said the serjeant, "I do not think it will come to any head; for we learned the day before yesterday, that *Madison had run away*."—I asked him; if they had been informed *whither he had run to*?—He replied, that he had run "*out of the country*." He further told me, that we were to have an army of 50,000 men for the conquest of America; and that, if they were not enough, *Russia* had 60,000 men ready to send to our assistance.—From this the Americans will judge of the opinions of the people here; for, I dare say, that this serjeant was no more than the mere re-

peater of what he heard in almost all the public-houses, resorted to by politicians of the most numerous class.—But the people are not to be blamed for this delusion. They had it given them, in the report of a speech of one of the Lords of the Admiralty, not long ago, that we were about to undertake the *deposing* of Mr. Madison; and who can blame them, if they believe that this deposition has taken place?—My friend, the serjeant, on whom I bestowed my benediction, will, however, I am afraid, find, that this work of deposing Mr. Madison will give more trouble than he appeared to expect; my reasons for which I shall state in my next.

JOANNA SOUTHCOTT.—In every age, and in all countries, there have been *visionaries, prophets, and inspired*. It would have been singular, therefore, if, in this age, which has produced so many *wonders*; which has given rise to the most astonishing events recorded in history, there should not also have started up some *pretender* to extraordinary gifts; some individual possessed of more shrewdness, of more cunning, than the generality of people, who are always disposed to listen to any one capable of exciting their wonder, and gratifying their unquenchable desire for the *marvellous*. It would, I say, have indeed been extraordinary, if this "new era" had not produced a person of this description; and as this age has far surpassed every other in the magnitude of its political occurrences, it would have been equally surprising if that individual had not boasted of superior endowments, far transcending those of his predecessors, who, like him, pretended to have received peculiar favour from on high. Ecclesiastical history presents us with innumerable instances of the rise and fall of these favourites of heaven; many of whom succeeded, even without the aid of the sword, in attaching vast numbers to their cause; and, perhaps, might have ultimately triumphed over the rival systems, had they been supported by a power like that which gave consequence to the *temporal* sway of the Roman Pontiff. But, amongst all these parties, I have not been able to discover one whose plans appeared so well laid, or whose claims to the possession of *supernatural* powers, were better calculated to arrest attention, than those of Joanna Southcott. The greater part of her former competitors for this sort of fame were timid and irresolute; their claims to divine inter-



course were asserted in a manner so *secret* as to excite *suspicion*; and what they were sometimes induced to declare openly, was done in so *ambiguous* a way, that even their most intimate followers found it difficult to ascertain the meaning of the oracles which they delivered. But in Joanna there is no want of *courage*. She seems to have been sufficiently aware that she lived in an *enlightened* age, in a country where *learning* abounds, amongst *scholars*, and with a people accustomed to *investigate* and to *criticise*. Nothing of *concealment* has marked her progress. From the commencement of, what she considers, her divine inspirations, she has *boldly* announced them; she has *challenged* inquiry; she has held *public conferences*; and she boasts of the *fulfilment* of predictions—not uttered in *secret*, but in the presence of thousands of her enemies, who now rank themselves among her disciples and warmest supporters. In introducing *Miss Joanna* to the notice of my readers, I readily acknowledge, that I have no wish to make them *converts* to her faith. I am not a convert myself; and probably some of her admirers will say, that this arises from my never having seen the lady, or perused any of her books. As to *visiting* the *holy dame*, I feel no inclination; and as to her books, I think it would be a *punishment* rather than a *pleasure* to be compelled to read them; for I am informed, that if all the “*Books of Wonders*,” published by Joanna, were collected together, they would make no less than eight or ten volumes octavo! The works of this *inspired* maiden have, in fact, been bought up with such avidity, that, admitting I were inclined to look into them, my bookseller says a copy of them is not to be had for love nor money. But although I have no desire to make proselytes for the sainted Joanna, notwithstanding the many *proofs* she has given of her *divine* mission, I have thought it proper not to let a system pass altogether unnoticed, which, from the great interest it has excited, and the numerous disciples Joanna has obtained, may, *it is not impossible*, prove a formidable rival, to perhaps totally supercede, all other systems of religion. Not being one of the *sealed*, I do not pretend to say that it *will* have that effect; but it seems pretty evident, if Joanna’s *pregnancy* does not *fail*, that it will be somewhat difficult to prevent the increase of her followers, who, it is said, already consist of entire counties, besides numerous individuals, in all quarters of

England, many of whom have considerable property, and are looked up to as men possessing a large portion of understanding.—From a short account published of Joanna’s life, and which, at the time I write, has already reached the *fifth* edition, it appears, that she was born in Gettisham, a village of Devonshire, in the month of April, 1750; so that she is now fully 64 years of age. At an early period of her life, she is described as having been very devout, and of having, at a more mature age, in consequence of attachment to religion, refused to enter the matrimonial state, although she entertained a mutual affection for a young man who had offered her marriage. In the year 1792, she first announced herself at Exeter as *divinely inspired*. She gave herself out to be “the Bride, the Lamb’s wife,” and “the Woman clothed with the Sun,” mentioned in the book of Revelations. On this occasion, her relations accused her of being *insane*, and she appears to have suffered greatly from the malignity of her persecutors. From that time to 1801, she busied herself, contrary to the usual practice of religious *reformers*, in endeavouring to gain over the *dignitaries* of the church, and in making converts in the *higher* circles. Finding it difficult, however, to combat long cherished prejudices, by verbal expostulation, or by letter, she availed herself of the press; and, in the year 1801, gave five different tracts to the public. These appear to have attracted the attention of several gentlemen, among whom were three clergymen (Dissenters, I presume,) who visited her at Exeter. After continuing with her for seven days, they left her, under the firm conviction, which they then declared, that her mission was *divine*. In the month of January, 1803, we find our prophetess engaged in a public controversy at a house in Paddington. This meeting had been previously advertised in the newspapers, and “those (as her biographer says) that *disapproved* of Joanna as a messenger from God, were desired to attend and produce their reasons.” None of her opponents, however, appeared. The consequence was, that the meeting unanimously declared in her favour. Another public meeting was called in December, 1804. The conferences on this occasion also continued seven days; at the end of which, such was the power and influence of Joanna’s eloquence, that all present, among whom were several clergymen, voluntarily subscribed a paper, in which they



declared it to be their "firm belief, that her prophecies, and other spiritual communications, emanate wholly and entirely from the spirit of the Living Lord."—Her further progress and success, are thus described by her biographer:—"Joanna has visited in her missionary capacity, Bristol, Leeds, Old Swinford, Stockport, &c. &c. At Old Swinford she has many adherents; and at Leeds her followers are very numerous. Joanna has for some years been stationary in London, living with an amiable lady, who (much to her praise) disposes of her income, in what she esteems the service of God. Joanna's cause in London has been, for a considerable time, in a flourishing state. She has a chapel in Duke-street, St. George's-fields, near the Obelisk, where they have preaching every Sunday, and where the Liturgy of the Church of England is also read. The service of the chapel is performed by Mr. Tozer. They have a choir of singers, and the hymns they sing were composed from the writings of their patroness. They administer in their chapel the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the first Sunday in every month, and profess themselves *members of the Church of England*. She has two other chapels, one at Greenwich and another at Twickenham. It was customary with the prophetess, during the early part of her career, to commit her supernatural communications to paper with her own hand; but, latterly, she has a secretary in attendance on her. When the Spirit is about to impart some communication, Joanna feels an agitation within; then the prophetess, her secretary, and the witness, range themselves in one group. After this, the Spirit begins to speak, addressing himself not to the witness, nor the secretary, but to Joanna *within*: so that our prophetess has simply to sit down and talk to herself! This she actually does, when the secretary, another female, takes down what she says, and then the witness, likewise feminine, signs it. Joanna will sometimes dictate a line only, sometimes a sentence, stopping till it is perfectly committed to writing.—Joanna assumes to usher in the Millennium, and to seal the faithful for the enjoyment of it, to the amount of one hundred and forty-four thousand; also to chain down Satan for a thousand years; and having thus handed over the good fruit of the tree of knowledge, and reinstated her fallen sex, to terminate the immense undertaking of man's

redemption."—But the most extraordinary part of Joanna's pretensions, is that of her being actually with child, like the Virgin Mary, by the instrumentality of the *Holy Ghost*; and that she will be delivered of a male child, the *Shiloh* promised to the Jews, about the middle of October next. This *miraculous* conception, it is said, was *foretold* by Joanna prior to the month of October, 1813—on the 14th day of which month, at midnight, it is pretended the divine impregnation took place. On this part of the subject she says, in one of her books, that "this sign is set to prove the truth of the gospel, or to prove that the gospel is not true; for this I am answered, if the visitation of the Lord does not produce a son this year, then Jesus Christ was NOT the son of God, born in the manner spoken by the Virgin Mary; but if I have a son this year, then, in like manner, our Saviour was born." Now, as to the fact of Joanna's pregnancy, it appears that no fewer than *nine* medical gentlemen have visited her since the 1st of August; six of whom have given it as their *positive* opinion, that she is with child, and the other three that she is not. The evidence, it cannot, therefore, be denied, preponderates in favour of Joanna's pretensions, in so far as the mere circumstance of the pregnancy goes. Here indeed she has been extremely anxious to satisfy the world, that in this particular, at least, she neither wishes to deceive herself, nor deceive others; for, independent of inviting every medical gentleman of respectability in London to visit her, she sent a copy of her book, with her portrait, in which the circumstances attending her impregnation are detailed, to the Prince Regent, to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Bishop of Worcester, Duke of Gloucester, Lord Grovesnor, Lord Ellenborough, the Duke of Kent, the Bishop of London, and the Bishop of Salisbury; "to prevent any imposition (as she states) being practised, either in my name by others; or, if I am led by a wrong spirit myself, it will be proved this year; and that no imposition may be practised upon the Jews, when I know without a doubt that I am with child."—Here, it must be admitted that Joanna shews the utmost *candour*, whatever she may do in other points. She does not deny the *possibility* of having been led by a *wrong* spirit, though she confidently asserts that she is with child, and appeals to the birth in proof of her assertion. In



a letter addressed by Joanna to Dr. Reece, on the 1st inst. I also find the following candid statement:—"Since I saw you, I have found a considerable alteration in myself, by feeling the life much stronger, and moving in different ways to what it had before; and more particularly this last week since I had a journey in the coach, when I removed from my own house, I have felt it much lower, and much greater weight. Mr. Carder will give you the particulars how I have been for this week past, that my appetite returned, and my pain and sickness left me, though in other respects the feeling of life within is greater than ever; but should it prove not to be a child in the end, it must bring me to the grave; but as you have come forward with your judgment to the public, and will be attacked for so doing, I wish to put every weapon in your hand, that if there is a possibility of my being deceived, that the life within should bring death upon me, without making its appearance in the world; I now promise to give you liberty to open my body, that you may find out the cause which produced all these effects, what life was in me to cause all these pains and sickness, like travail pains, the increase of the size of my body, which have increased so much within a few months, so that either in death or life you will be enabled to judge of a cause, that never was brought before medical men, of a woman at my age."—It is unquestionably a most extraordinary circumstance, that a woman of Joanna's great age should be found with child; but nature, we know, is often very capricious in her productions. Nor is Joanna's case without a parallel, if the following statement, taken from the newspapers, is to be relied on:—"Ellin Ellis, of Beaumaris, in Anglesey, aged 72, was brought to bed May 10th, 1776: she had been married 46 years, and her eldest was 45 years old. She had not had a child for 25 years before."—At all events, with the evidence already before the public, I do not see how, in the present stage of the business, the fact of Joanna's pregnancy can well be disputed. A Dr. Sims, one of the three medical gentlemen, who visited Joanna, and declared against the pregnancy, has published his reasons for holding that opinion. He attributes the symptoms which led others to declare for the pregnancy, to a disease in the uterine organs.—I have no wish to enter the lists with any medical gentleman;

but I cannot help remarking here, that Dr. Sims admits the examination he made of Joanna was not so complete as, in my opinion, the circumstances of the case called for. He states, that it was only "external," and that if this had not been sufficient to satisfy him, he would "have urged the propriety of her submitting to a more satisfactory examination." But why pronounce *definitively*, if there was a possibility of thinking otherwise, from a more close inspection?—To me it seems pretty clear, that there is nothing in Dr. Sims statement to superinduce a persuasion that Joanna is *not* pregnant.—To adopt such an opinion would not only be in opposition to the conviction of her own mind, strengthened by every day's experience, but in direct contradiction to what six other medical gentlemen, equally respectable with Dr. Sims, have declared, upon a "satisfactory examination." With regard to the supernatural part of the story, the conception of a child without any connection with a man, I leave this to others to believe or disbelieve as they may think proper. Joanna asserts it; and says "this I can take a solemn oath to, I never had knowledge of man in my life."—The Rev. Mr. Tozer, Toozer, or Towzer, also offers to swear, "that no man has seen or spoken to Joanna from August 1813 to August 1814, when the doctors were admitted to examine her." This, perhaps, is sufficient for the greater part of Joanna's believers; but there are many, I find, who hesitate as to avowing their faith, until the event of the pregnancy is demonstrated by the delivery. If that should take place, and the child be a boy, I have no doubt her followers will increase to an astonishing degree. It is not of the *miraculous* conception, of the *divine incarnation*, which people in general doubt, or which prevents the many from declaring themselves. It is the fact of the pregnancy only which they seem to question. The human mind has indeed been sufficiently prepared to admit of supernatural conceptions. In all countries we find the belief of *divine* incubations prevailing amongst the people. The Indians believed that their God Vichenou underwent different incarnations, which occasioned his appearance sometimes in the form of a boar, and sometimes in that of a lion. At last, say his followers, he will assume the form of a horse, "with a sabre in his hand, to destroy the present inhabitants of the world, to darken the stars,

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to drive the planets from their spheres, to shake the whole earth, and to oblige the mighty serpent to vomit a flame which shall consume the globes." This same Vichenou, it is said by the Bramans, was himself the production of the first Being, who, "desirous of manifesting himself, separated the faculties of male and female which were in him, and operated an act of generation, of which Vichenou is the emblem."—The Heathens believed that Jupiter converted himself into a bull, in order to carry off Europa; and that Minerva was incarnate in the brain, and Bacchus in the thigh of the same god. The mother of Plato said that she had been visited by Apollo, to whom she attributed her pregnancy of that philosopher. The Egyptians asserted that the sun was brought forth by their god Isis. They also believed that "God vomited an egg, from which was produced another God named Vulcan." The Syrians pretended "that a dove sat, for a certain number of days, on the egg of a fish, and that from this incubation Venus was born." The priests of Thibet teach the people, that the grand Lama, who is also their god, never dies, but becomes incarnate in his own person, which he reproduces at pleasure. Of this system, Volney gives the following curious particulars: "Thus is God incessantly rendering himself *incarnate*; but his greatest and most solemn incarnation was 3000 years ago, in the province of Cassimere, under the name of Fôt, or Beddou, for the purpose of teaching the doctrine of self-denial, and self-annihilation. Fôt sprang from the right intercostal of a virgin of the royal blood, who, when she became a mother, did not the less continue to be a virgin. The king of the country, uneasy at his birth, was desirous to put him to death, and caused all the males who were born at the same period, to be massacred. Being saved by shepherds, Beddou lived in the desert to the age of thirty years, at which time he opened his commission, preaching the doctrine of truth, and casting out devils. He performed a multitude of miracles, spent his life in fasting, and the severest mortifications; and, at his death, bequeathed to his disciples, the volume in which the principles of his religion are contained."—The Tartars believe, that God becomes incarnate in human bodies. The Chinese say, that their god Fo (probably the same as Fôt) "was generated by a virgin, ren-

dered prolific by a ray of the sun." The same pretensions to divine origin, by the impregnation of a female, was claimed for Appollonius Tyaneus, who was set up as a rival to our Saviour. It was said that the god Proteus appeared to his mother, and told her, that the child with which she was pregnant was himself. At an early period of the church, the doctrine of incarnations having been disputed by some heretics, the celebrated Lactantius, "in order to establish that the spirit of God could impregnate a virgin, cites the example of the Thracian maids, and other females, rendered prolific by the wind."—Such are a few of the instances recorded in history, of the belief, formerly entertained by the credulous, that God operated the production and reproduction of himself, by having intercourse with the *creatures* he had formed; and although there is not an individual in this country who gives the least credit to these absurdities, it must be acknowledged that the fact of this doctrine, possessing so *remote* an antiquity, and having been received and professed for so many ages, and still believed by so great a proportion of the human race, is somewhat calculated to countenance the disciples of Joanna, in the credit which they give to her pretended supernatural conception. I shall say nothing of the Divine impregnation of the Virgin Mary, because all who are of the church firmly believe it, whether they are followers of Joanna, or not. She declares, indeed, that her whole mission tends to *confirm* the doctrines of the church; and, as far as I have been able to discover, she has not advanced any thing subversive of the Faith. A paragraph appeared last week in the *Courier*, in which it was stated, that it was not unlikely there was now grafted upon Joanna's doctrines "a scheme from some *infidels* to gratify their passion for ridiculing what they cannot impeach. How long will this be endured? Is it not known that *blasphemy is an offence punishable by law*?"—If by *infidels* are here meant, those who have written *against* the Christian religion, the objection does not in any shape apply; for Joanna is not *hostile* to Christianity, but the contrary. Neither is it treating these writers with fairness to assert, that they employ ridicule *only*; when it is well known, that in whatever way they treat the subject, they are not met by *argument* of any description, but dealt with agreeably to the above maxim, "that



blasphemy is an offence punishable by law." It was upon this maxim, I presume, which supplies the place of fair discussion, that the magistrates shut up the meeting-houses belonging to the followers of Joanna. It is pretended that it was necessary to interfere as to the Borough Chapel, on account of a riot which took place there on a Sunday. But this was an unwarrantable stretch of power. The duty of a Magistrate is to preserve the peace by putting down riots, and to guard the peaceable inhabitants from their consequences. Here they not only suppressed the riot, but they took upon them, by shutting up a regularly *licensed* chapel, to exercise powers not conferred by Act of Parliament; *contrary*, in fact, to the statute, by which preachers are licensed, and which gives no authority to any set of Magistrates to deprive a body of Christians of the privilege, once obtained, of assembling together, to hear what doctrines they please. A preacher may utter, what is called, blasphemy from the pulpit; he may even preach up sedition and treason.--- When he does so, let him be made answerable for this in his own person. But to deprive several numerous congregations, as has been done in this case, of the right every man has to worship God in the way he thinks best, and that too after all these congregations had received the sanction of a Justice of the Peace so to worship, was a proceeding that can be equalled no where but in the tribunals of the Inquisition.--- The riot did not even begin in the chapel; though, if it had, this would not have been a sufficient reason for shutting it up. It was occasioned by the improper conduct of the enemies of Joanna; who, by the statute, merit punishment, for disturbing a congregation in the performance of Divine worship; while the parties disturbed, instead of being made the sufferers, should have been encouraged, by protection being afforded them against future insults.--- But, after all, what is the meaning that this writer, in the *Courier*, affixes to the word *blasphemy*? Is he aware, that the Act of Parliament, which declared it to be blasphemy to deny any of the persons of the Trinity, has been repealed?—Can any one say, that Joanna, or her preachers, have gone so far as to deny the Divine Incarnation of Jesus Christ? Supposing it could be said, which I believe it cannot, that they do deny this; admitting that the whole of her followers asserted, that our Saviour came into the

world in the way other people's children come; where would be the blasphemy, or even the impropriety, of asserting what an Act of Parliament *permits* every man to assert? It is no doubt true, that I strenuously opposed the repeal of the Blasphemy Act; but now, that it has been repealed; and (let it be remembered) without any opposition from the Bench of Bishops; now, that every one is at liberty *by law*, to deny the Divine Incarnation, or the Blessed Trinity, when and where he thinks fit, it is rather assuming too much; it is rather somewhat imperious; somewhat arrogant and presumptuous, in any man to charge another with blasphemy; or to call for the infliction of the punishment of that offence upon a sect of professed Christians, who, it is clear, hold those very doctrines as firmly as the Church, which it would even be no crime in them to deny. The celebrated Gordon, who wrote about the middle of the last century, very pertinently remarked, that "Blasphemy is like heresy—a big word, which they who make the loudest noise about it rarely define, and indeed rarely can; a word which passionate and crafty men throw at one another in their religious quarrels, and if you will believe either side, both sides are blasphemers."—For my part, I do not understand how the crime of blasphemy can be committed at all. The word signifies *detraction*, which implies malice, and is never used but in reference to the Deity. Gordon says, "A man who *knows* God, cannot speak evil of a Being whom he knows to be blessed and beneficent, the author and giver of all good, with whom no evil can dwell; and a man who knows him *not*, and reviles him, does therefore revile him, because he knows him not.—He therefore puts the name of God to his misapprehensions of God. This is so far from speaking *evil* of the Deity, that it is not speaking of the Deity *at all*. It is only speaking evil of a *wild idea*; of a creature of the *imagination*, and existing no where but there."—Adopting this rational view, it is impossible any man can be guilty of blasphemy against God. The word seems, indeed, to have been introduced merely as a *cover* to the persecuting zeal of bigotry—and to afford protection to the *abuses* which have been introduced into religion. Whenever these are attacked; whenever it is attempted to undisguise truth, and to expose the ridiculous observances and tenets by which it has

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been disfigured, the cry of blasphemy, like the cry of jacobinism, is then set up, and the objects of it seldom or ever escape until their ruin is effected. In the case of Joanna, however, I do not see that there exists even the shadow of a ground upon which to justify the rigorous steps that have been taken against her followers.—Much less do I think that Joanna herself is a person who has done any thing deserving punishment. Her pretensions are such as no man can interfere with, without a direct infringement of the rights of nature, which preclude all controul of one man over another, in matters of faith. It is likewise a violation of the law, which gives to every professed Christian a right to assemble in any place of worship that has been previously licensed, and there openly to deny, if he pleases, not only that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but also the whole doctrine of the Trinity. In no possible case, in my opinion, can the suppression of opinions, *by violence*, be justified; because open discussion can do injury to no one who wishes well to the cause of truth. As to Joanna, there is not even the slightest reason for apprehension; for should she even be delivered of a male child, her pretensions to supernatural agency may be met by fair argument, which can never be overthrown by error; and, if her pregnancy prove *abortive*, or the fruit of it be a female, her system will fall of itself, without any reasoning about it.

#### LORD COCHRANE.

MR. COBBETT.—I have taken the liberty to intimate to you, that, so far back as the 21st July, the inhabitants of the Royal Burgh of Culross and the neighbourhood, called together by public advertisement, voted and transmitted to Lord Cochrane a Congratulatory Address upon his re-election for Westminster; which event, they said, "may be considered as the verdict of the *last* tribunal," to whom he had appealed from the charges lately preferred against him. They did not overlook mentioning their admiration of the firmness with which his Lordship met those charges, and after taking notice of the great respect they ever held for his Lordship, as an active and vigilant servant of the country, they concluded "by calling to mind the many heroic actions your Lordship has performed in your country's cause, we look forward with confidence

"to a renewal of your ardent and gallant exertions for her advantage, notwithstanding the persecutions you are now suffering; and we sincerely hope that, in defiance of party and faction, you shall again shine forth an ornament to your profession, an honour to your country, and the boast of this place, the ancient residence of your noble family." And they entreat his Lordship speedily to forgive and forget those sufferings an honourable mind must sustain whilst struggling against unfounded accusations, "*aggravated by unprecedented judicial proceedings.*" This is the substance of the Address, and the following is a copy of his Lordship's answer:—"King's Bench, August 4, 1814.—SIR,—I take the earliest opportunity, which the pressure of my affairs afforded me, of conveying to my much respected friends of Culross, my most heartfelt thanks for the interest they take in my character and welfare, and for the truly gratifying manner in which they have demonstrated their feelings, which are at once an honour to themselves and to me. You may, with great truth, assure our respectable townsmen, that their unfeigned congratulations on my re-election, add greatly to the satisfaction which I derive from that triumphant event; and that whatever may be the value of my actions, the motives in which they originate ever have been, and ever shall be, such as may claim the reward of their good opinion. I send you a newspaper, containing the Letter of De Berenger, by which you will perceive that my enemies have now an agent, even within the confines of my prison. But I shall eventually triumph over all their machinations." In your last *Register* you assert, that the respectable inhabitants of the town of Paisley are the *first* who have come forward in this patriotic cause; but by a reference to the dates, you will perceive that this place was fourteen days earlier than Paisley. If any merit therefore is due from priority, I must be excused for asserting the right to this place; and while I do, I shall be glad if a subsequent paper shall announce that that is even claimed by some other. I shall esteem myself honoured by your inserting this Letter in your valuable *Register*, and I have the honour to be, &c.

A DETESTER OF TYRANNY.

Culross, 3d September, 1814.



**CORN LAWS.**—The Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, which I have given below, clearly indicates that some legislative measure may still be expected, for the vain purpose of *regulating* the price of this important, and, above all others, most necessary, article of subsistence. The Committee have done so far well, in pointing out the great advantages which must result from a proper encouragement of agriculture at home, and the baneful consequences which must follow if it is discouraged or neglected. But they have attached too much importance to the importation of corn from other countries. It is admitted, that all foreign supply must be *precarious*; yet, it is to the Baltic the Committee have directed the attention of Parliament, as a great, if not a principal, source, whence deficiencies are to be made up, when our own crops are unproductive. Nothing, in my opinion, can be more fallacious. There is no certainty of obtaining a full and regular supply of corn, but from our own soil; which, if properly cultivated, is capable of meeting all our wants. As this is a subject which requires more attention than my present limits will admit of, and I have much to say respecting it, I shall take the earliest opportunity of resuming my remarks.

#### REPORT OF THE CORN COMMITTEE.

The Select Committee to whom the several Petitions which have been presented to This House, in the present Session of Parliament, upon the subject of the Corn Laws, were referred to consider so much of the said Petitions as relates to the Trade in Foreign Corn, and to the Duties now payable thereupon, and to report the same, with their observations thereupon, to The House, and who were also empowered to report the Minutes of Evidence taken before them;—have considered the matters referred to them; and have agreed to the following Report:—

In taking into their consideration the important subject referred to them by the House, they have proceeded, in the first place, to examine into the state of the growth of corn at home, and the circumstances which affect the same. The laws which regulate the importation of foreign corn, and the duties payable thereupon, having been altered from time to time, with a reference to these circumstances, and to the expense of raising corn in this country, it appeared to your Committee that such an inquiry must necessarily precede, and form part of any consideration of the trade in foreign corn.—Under this first head, your Committee have turned their attention to

the following points:—1st. The recent extension and improvement of the agriculture of the United Kingdom: 2d. The present expense of cultivation, including the rent: 3d. The price necessary to remunerate the grower. On the first point, it appears to your Committee to be established by all the evidence, that, within the last twenty years, a very rapid and extensive progress has been made in the agriculture of the United Kingdom:—that great additional capitals have been skilfully and successfully applied, not only to the improved management of lands already in tillage, but also to the converting of large tracts of inferior pasture into productive arable, and the reclaiming and inclosing of fens, commons, and wastes, which have been brought into a state of regular cultivation:—that many extensive enterprises, directed to the same important objects, are some of them still in their infancy:—that others, though in a more forward state, do not yet make any return for the large advances which have been laid out upon them; and that these advances, in many instances, will be a total loss to the parties (involving also the loss to the nation of the produce, which in a few years might be expected from such expensive undertakings) if, from the want of a sufficient encouragement to continue them, they should be abandoned in their present unfinished state. It is to the stimulus of this encouragement, during the last 20 years, more than to any other cause, that all the witnesses ascribe the great increase which has taken place in the annual produce of our soil, and the late rapid extension of the improved system of our husbandry; a system which, it is stated by them, has originated in, and can only be maintained by large additions to the farming capital of the kingdom. The great source of this encouragement, in the judgment of your Committee, is to be traced to the increasing population and growing opulence of the United Kingdom; but it is also not to be concealed, that these causes, which they trust will be of a permanent and progressive nature, have been incidentally but considerably aided by those events, which, during the continuance of the war, operated to check the importation of foreign corn. The sudden removal of these impediments appears to have created, among the occupiers of land, a certain degree of alarm, which, if not allayed, would tend, in the opinion of the witnesses examined by your Committee, not only to prevent the inclosure and cultivation of great tracts of land still lying waste and unproductive, but also to counteract the spirit of improvement in other quarters, and to check its progress upon lands already under tillage.

(2.)—With respect to the second point, “the expense of cultivation, including the rent,” it is stated by all the evidence, that, within the same period of twenty years, the

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money rent of land, taken upon an average, has been doubled; but if the value of the rent be measured by the proportion which it bears to the gross produce of land, it appears to have very considerably diminished within the period in question: the landlord's share of the whole produce of estates occupied by tenants, having been twenty years ago about one-third, and being now calculated at no more than from one fourth to one-fifth. With respect to the amount of capital requisite for the stocking of a farm, and the general expenses of management and cultivation, there appears to be very little difference in the evidence. They are stated to be at least double what they were twenty years ago. Without pretending to offer to the House any statement by which they might be enabled to form an opinion, how much of this increase of charge has been produced by increased taxation; your Committee have thought it not unconnected with this part of their inquiry, to call for an account of the total amount of taxes received into the Exchequer, in the several years ended the 5th of April, 1791, 1804, and 1814; which will be found in the Appendix.

(3.)—On the third point, “the price necessary to remunerate the grower of corn,” it is obvious that it must be almost impossible to arrive at any very precise conclusion; and that this price will vary according to the variations of soil, markets, skill and industry in the occupier, and many other circumstances affecting differently not only different districts, but different farms in the same district. At the same time, there can be no doubt that these circumstances are taken into consideration, both by those who let, and those who take farms; and that their calculations of charges and outgoings on the one hand, and of return on the other, are made with a reference to some given price, as that which, upon a fair average crop, would be necessary to remunerate the grower. It is this price which your Committee have endeavoured to ascertain.—One of the witnesses examined by your Committee states, that, according to the calculations which he has made of the expenses and produce upon a farm which he occupies, he is of opinion that, wheat being at 72s. per quarter, the growers of corn would be able to live; but this calculation, he adds, is made on the supposition that the property tax will be taken off, and the price of labour reduced. It is the concurrent opinion of most of the other witnesses, that 80s. per quarter is the lowest price which would afford to the British grower an adequate remuneration. Their evidence is inserted at length in the minutes, and their names will be found to include many of the most eminent surveyors and land agents from different parts of Great Britain, as well as some persons who have been long and very extensively engaged in the corn trade, and

several occupiers of land distinguished for their practical knowledge, and the accurate manner in which they have kept their farming accounts. On this part of the subject it is very material to bear in mind, that many of these witnesses, who are very extensively employed as surveyors and land agents in the letting of estates, all concur, in stating, that the calculations upon which they have proceeded for some years have in no instance been below 80s. a quarter; and that they have frequently exceeded that price.—Several other witnesses, equally distinguished for their knowledge and experience in matters connected with the letting of estates and the agriculture of the country, state, that the price of 80s. a quarter will not afford a sufficient protection to the British grower. The evidence and calculations which they have given to the Committee, will also be found in the Appendix; by a reference to which it will appear, that several prices, from 84s. up to 96s. have been stated by different witnesses, as the lowest which, under the present charges and expense of cultivation, would afford a remuneration to the grower. It may be proper to observe, that these latter calculations appear, in most instances, to be furnished by witnesses, whose attention and experience have been principally directed to districts consisting chiefly of cold clay, or waste and inferior lands, on which wheat cannot be grown but at an expence exceeding the average charge of its cultivation on better soils. On lands of this description, however, a very considerable proportion of wheat is now raised: and it appears by the evidence, that if such lands were withdrawn from tillage, they would for many years be of very little use, as pasture: and that the loss from such a change, as well to the occupiers as to the general stock of national subsistence, would be very great.

Your Committee having thus briefly stated the principal result of their inquiry into the state of our own agriculture, and the circumstances which affect the growth and price of corn in the United Kingdom: it remains for them to bring before the House, in a like manner, the substance of the evidence which they have procured respecting the trade in foreign corn, which seems naturally to form the second, and only remaining branch of this important subject, as far as it stands referred to the consideration of your Committee. They have, in the first place, to express their regret at not having been able to procure any information respecting the expense of raising corn in foreign countries; but, although their endeavours have failed in this respect, your Committee have collected such evidence, on other points, as appears to them very important for the due consideration of the Corn Laws. It appears from the statement of Mr. Scott, a member of your Committee, confirmed by the evidence of other witnesses



acquainted with the trade in foreign corn, that, in the countries bordering on the Baltic and the North Sea, wheat is grown, not so much for the consumption of their own population (which is supplied by rye and other inferior grain) as for a foreign market:—that, from Poland in particular, the greatest part of the wheat annually produced, is regularly sent down to the shipping ports of the Baltic, for exportation; and that these are the only ports of Europe to which the countries not growing wheat enough for their own consumption can resort, with a certainty of procuring an annual supply. In these ports it appears, from the evidence, that the price of wheat is not regulated, as it is in countries where it forms the habitual subsistence of the people, by the state of the home market; but almost entirely by the demand in the other countries of Europe, which are in the habit of making large purchases in the Baltic;—that the market price of wheat at Dantzic, for instance, is not so much affected by the abundance or deficiency of the crop in Poland, where, be the quantity more or less, it is grown for exportation, as it is by the price in the markets of London or Lisbon. It is therefore obvious, that, if the prices in these and the other importing markets should be very low, the price in the ports of the Baltic must fall to meet them; consequently there is scarcely any price in our own market, which, under circumstances of a general abundance in the other parts of Europe, would be sufficiently low to prevent an importation of corn from those foreign ports at which a considerable supply is annually accumulated for exportation only. The evidence of Mr. Scott, on this point, appears to your Committee to be so material, and his knowledge and experience give so much weight to that evidence, that they cannot forbear inserting it. It is as follows:—

“Supposing the growth of wheat in this kingdom to be below an average crop, do you think that any importation that could be reckoned upon from the Baltic, would prevent the price of wheat in the home market from rising above 80s. a quarter?—I think not.—Do you think, that importation from other quarters aiding that from the Baltic, would produce that effect?—Unless under circumstances of a general abundance in the countries not habitually exporting corn, I think not.—Supposing the price of wheat in England to be 63s. a quarter, and a general abundance in Europe, do you think that a considerable importation could take place into this country?—I do.—Do you think it could at any price below 63s. supposing the duty not to counteract such importation?—It is difficult to state what price would be sufficiently low to prevent an importation from those parts that annually have a considerable quantity to spare.—Under the circumstances above stated, would not such an importation tend mate-

rially to depress the home market, even though the prices were as low as 63s. per quarter?—Undoubtedly.—You have stated, that no importation that could be reckoned upon would prevent the price of corn, in the home market, from rising above 80s. in the event of our own growth being below an average crop; now do you think that, in the event of the protecting price against importation being raised from 63s. to 80s. the quantity of corn imported would be diminished one single bushel, in the event of our own growth being any thing below an average crop?—Certainly not.—On the other hand, were a large importation to take place, such as you have stated under certain circumstances may happen, when the price is at or below 63s. would not the effect be to discourage the growth of wheat in this kingdom?—Certainly it would.—The evidence of Mr. Charles Frederick Hennings, a native of Elbing, locally acquainted with the districts of Poland, from which the corn is sent to the ports of the Baltic for exportation, and himself a corn-factor of considerable experience in London, is in substance the same as that of Mr. Scott on this important part of the trade in foreign corn.

Two obvious, but very important inferences, are to be derived from this evidence: 1st. That in the event of the price at which foreign corn should be admitted to importation duly free being raised from 63s. to 80s. per quarter, (assuming, for the sake of argument, the latter to be the price necessary for the protection of the British grower), this alteration would in no degree check the importation of corn from foreign countries, whenever the quantity grown in this kingdom should be below an average crop. And, 2d. That, under certain circumstances, a price in the home market, already so low as to be altogether inadequate to the remuneration of the British grower, might be still further depressed by an importation of foreign corn, if the law should not interfere to check such importation.—In France, it appears by the evidence, the growth of wheat is, in common years, fully adequate to her consumption; and that it is only occasionally, when her own harvest is very deficient, that any considerable purchases are made on her own account in the Baltic. This country, on the contrary, having been for many years habitually and extensively dependent on a foreign supply, our demand has borne so large a proportion to that of other countries, that the Baltic prices are principally governed by those of the British market. That this is the case, even in the present year, is in some degree corroborated by a paper furnished to your Committee by Mr. John Wilson; by which it appears, that, on the 17th of May last, the price of wheat at Dantzic was from £.350 to £.380 per last, making, at the then exchange upon London of 14/15, a price of about 2l. 9s. 10d. per qr.; but that, on the 3d June, when the exchange upon London had risen to

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1812, the price of Dantzic wheat immediately followed it: so that, notwithstanding this great improvement of the exchange in favour of this country, the prices at which wheat could be purchased by a bill upon London remained nearly the same, viz. f. 370 to f. 390 per last, or 2l. 10s. 8d. per quarter.—If this country, either from policy or necessity, should continue to depend on the import of foreign corn for the subsistence of a portion of its population, it is obvious from all the evidence, that the Baltic is the only part of Europe upon which we can rely for a steady and regular supply;—that Spain or Portugal are more or less our habitual competitors in that market; and that France resorts to it occasionally when her own harvest is deficient. Occasionally also, the government of France appears to permit the exportation of a part of her own produce, but only for a limited time, and when her own markets are very much depressed. This, therefore, is a resource which cannot be reckoned upon by an habitually importing country. It may be forthcoming when least wanted, and withheld at the moment of our greatest need.—It is a fact, not undeserving the attention of the House, that a considerable duty appears to be levied on all corn exported from the Baltic. Your Committee have reason to believe, that this duty has been greatly increased on some occasions, when the wants of this country were most pressing. Indeed it cannot escape observation, that revenue being the object for which a duty is imposed; and the prices in the Baltic being governed by price here, the scale of such a duty admits of being increased in proportion to the degree of scarcity and consequent high price existing in this country.—From a consideration of this and the many other inconveniences, both domestic and political, which, in a country like this, cannot fail to grow out of a state of habitual and extensive dependence on a supply of foreign corn, your Committee have great satisfaction in observing, that of late the export of corn from Great Britain and Ireland has nearly, if not fully, balanced the importation. Looking to this important change in our situation; to the abundance which we now enjoy; and to the great and extensive improvement made in cultivation both here and in Ireland, your Committee cannot but indulge a hope that we have nearly arrived at that state, in which nothing but a discouragement and consequent falling off of our own agriculture can again drive us to the necessity of trusting to large importations of foreign corn, except in unfortunate seasons, when it may be necessary to resort to this resource, to supply the deficiency of our own harvest.—Should this expectation be confirmed, as they trust it will, by the experience of future years, it will be highly gratifying to the view which your Committee take of this important national concern. They are convinced that a reliance on foreign importation, to a large

amount, is neither salutary nor safe for this country to look to as a permanent system; and that many of the sacrifices and privations to which the people have been obliged to submit, during the late long and arduous contest, would have been materially alleviated if their means of subsistence had been less dependent on foreign growth. If, compelled by the frequent recurrence of those sacrifices and privations, the country has at last made exertions which will enable us, under ordinary circumstances, to hold ourselves independent of the precarious aid of foreign supply,—your Committee, without venturing to suggest the mode, cannot doubt that it will become the wisdom, and will consequently be the policy of Parliament, on the one hand, by protecting British agriculture, to maintain, if not to extend, the present scale of its exertions and produce; and on the other, consistently with this first object, to afford the greatest possible facility and inducement to the import of foreign corn, whenever, from adverse seasons, the stock of our own growth shall be found inadequate to the consumption of the United Kingdom. As connected with the general interests of trade, even independent of the great object of occasionally supplying our own wants, it is evident that this country possesses peculiar advantages for becoming a deposit for foreign corn. It can only be made so by our allowing the free import of grain, to be bonded and warehoused free from all duty, and as much as possible from local charges, or harassing regulations; and by the owners of grain so bonded being permitted, at all times, and under all circumstances, to take it out of the warehouses, either for exportation or for home consumption; subject, in the latter case, only to the same rules and duties as may be applicable to any other corn immediately entered for that purpose. Your Committee are so forcibly impressed with the importance of this measure, that they cannot conclude this Report without stating their opinion,—that any encouragement which could ensure to this country the benefit of becoming the place of intermediate deposit in the trade of corn from the North to the South of Europe, would, in addition to other very important advantages, have at all times a tendency to keep the price more steady in the home market, and to afford to the country a security, the best, perhaps, that, in the present increased state of our population, can be devised, against the effects of a deficient harvest.—July 26, 1814.

**THE POPE.**—No sooner have we got rid, according to the generally received opinion, of the most oppressive tyranny, in the Government of Napoleon, that ever existed on earth, than a new tyrant rears up his head, who does not only meditate the establishment of a despotic sway over the *bodies*, but actually professes it to be his in-



tention to subjugate the *minds* of the whole human race, to a spiritual domination. On the first view one takes of this subject, it excites surprise. We are apt to be astonished at the folly of an attempt, on the part of any Sovereign, to restore the barbarous usages and the superstitious rites of the dark ages. But when we reflect a little on the subject, we will find that there is nothing very extraordinary in this; that it is what was to be expected in the circumstances of the case. It is well known, that Pope Pius VII. is an old and infirm man, whose faculties must, in the course of nature, be considerably impaired. His long imprisonment, too, must have greatly accelerated that *infantile* state to which old age is almost uniformly subjected. In such circumstances, it can be no matter of surprise, that on so sudden and unexpected an elevation as what his has been, he should have fallen into the hands, and have become the dupe of a cunning and interested priesthood, who are ever on the watch to take advantage of public events, and of weak-minded Sovereigns, in order to forward their own ambitious projects. But this is not the only circumstance, in the case of Pius, that has led to the re-establishment of these monstrous institutions, and the avowal of those infamous principles, under which the Church of Rome formerly held the human mind in bondage. To this very country; to this *enlightened* age; to the *thinking*, the *reflecting*, the *intelligent* people of England, are to be ascribed, more than to any other cause, the melancholy, the gloomy, the degrading, and disgraceful change, that threatens to restore the empire of the clergy, by which the world was formerly, for so many centuries, plunged in midnight darkness.—Ever since a coalition was formed against France by the Allied Powers; ever since the authority of the Pope was disregarded by the Revolutionists of France, the cause of his Holiness was espoused by us as *the cause of God*. Instead of abusing him as the bigots and fanatics were in use to do; instead of loading him with the epithets of *Whore of Babylon*, *Scarlet Whore*, and the *Beast*, we regarded him as *a real servant of the Lord*. We applauded his resistance to the attempts which were made to curtail his power. We considered him the *opposer* of tyranny. We eulogised him as the *friend of humanity*. We extolled him as the *assertor* of the people's rights.

We styled him *a true son of the Church*. We proclaimed his cause to be *the cause of heaven*, in which no monarch could refuse to take a part, without incurring the Divine displeasure. In short, had a *Crusade* been set on foot in favour of the Church of Rome, such was the attachment to, such the regard, and such the zeal, of the *thinking*, the *reflecting*, the *intelligent*, the *good*, and *pious*, people of this country for the interests of the Pope, that it was to be expected, an association, at least equal to that which reared its head against jacobinism, would have been formed here, and as much blood shed to obtain possession of the Roman See, as flowed in the frantic attempts to deliver the *Holy Land*, and rescue, from the polluted hands of the Saracens, the wood of the true cross, the sacred porringer, the Virgin's smock, the thorn of St. Paul, and the tail of Balaam's ass.—Can it be a matter of astonishment then, that the Holy Father, after such marked proofs were given by his *dear children* in this great empire, of their *entire devotion* to his cause, that he should not, under the sanction of such high authority, endeavour to resume the extensive influence over the consciences of men, that his predecessors held, and which they considered so essential to the glory of Christ's kingdom on earth? A much less reflecting man than Pope Pius is represented to be; at least, a less penetrating, and less cunning body, than we know his Cardinals and other clergy to be, could not have hesitated as to the part it was necessary to take in such favourable circumstances. The people of England—aye, the *wise* people of England; who exult in having effected the overthrow of Napoleon, yet have lent their assistance to bring an independent nation under the yoke of one of Napoleon's captains, and still boast of being able to re-colonize and enslave a whole Continent. These very people who talk so loud about liberty, about humanity, and about their exertions to *emancipate the human mind*, have encouraged, have given a stimulus to, and have sanctioned, all the late proceedings of the Roman Pontiff.—It is to Great Britain that mankind owe the re-establishment of the Inquisition, of the Jesuits, and the revival of all those Orders of Monks, of Friars, and of Nuns, which our forefathers were in use to regard as the most disgraceful and immoral of all institutions.—I have annexed to this article a new Edict of the Pope, by which he suppresses all

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secret meetings, particularly *Freemason* societies. This measure is justified, in the preamble, upon the following grounds:—  
 “The mysterious operations which accompany the forms, the ceremonies, rites, and oaths; to keep a secret at least suspicious, and especially the indiscriminate assembling of persons of every class and nation, whatever be their morals or religion—all these reasons must excite fair grounds of suspicion against the members of such associations, of designs not only against thrones, but even against religion, and especially against the Church of Jesus Christ, of which the Roman Pontiff has been constituted the head and guardian by its divine founder himself.”—I do not know how the Princes and Nobles of this land, the greater part of whom are *Freemasons*, will feel at being told, that these associations, which they every where countenance and support, entertain “designs not only against thrones, but even against religion.” It must indeed be very humiliating to find themselves placed on a footing with the *regicides* and *levellers* of the French Revolution. They cannot but be indignant at the Holy Father for associating them with such bad company. But how are they to help themselves? It was the vile press which they countenanced and supported, that, at first, gave encouragement to the Pope. They may now try to wipe off the disgrace, by employing that same press as an engine against him. The canting and servile conductor of the *Times* newspaper, has, indeed, already attempted something of this nature. But as the supporters of corruption overshot the mark in this instance, as in every other, this writer, instead of acknowledging the manifest error he committed, in giving any countenance to this spiritual usurpation, now comes forward, not to reprobate it *in toto*, but merely to censure *partial* acts, certain *parts* of the Pontiff’s decrees, as detestable; when he must have been aware, that the moment the Pope was permitted to re-assume his former power, every edict which he promulgated would be hostile, *in all its parts*, to liberty, and to the happiness of man. The object of the Roman clergy is to bring every one under the sway of the Pope. It is not *half* measures they employ, to accomplish this, as ecclesiastical history sufficiently demonstrates. It was the height of folly, therefore, to expect, that his Holiness would make any regulation a matter

of conscience, or consider any edict *detestable*, which he, and his *holy* conclave of Cardinals, considered necessary to the re-establishment of their power. If it is now intended to oppose a barrier to the daring encroachments of the Church of Rome; if peoples eyes are really beginning to open to the danger which threatens them; and if they are desirous to maintain that footing which they now possess; they must not content themselves with merely attempting to lop off a branch from the *poisoned* tree; they must *lay the axe to the root*, otherwise it will become more luxuriant by pruning, and finally prove too formidable for any attempts to overthrow it.

#### *The Pope’s Decree against Freemasons.*

ROME, AUG. 20.—Cardinal Pacca, Pro-Secretary of State, has published an Edict which prohibits all secret meetings, and especially those of *Freemasons*. The following are its principal articles:—

1. In conformity to the edicts of Clement XII. and Benedict XIV. which pronounce excommunication, *ipso facto*, against all members of secret Societies, and particularly of that of *Freemasons*, every inhabitant of Rome, or any other part of the Roman States, is forbidden to continue, to re-establish, or to institute, what are called *Freemason’s Societies*, or any similar meetings, under whatever name.

2. They are forbidden to be even once present at any of these meetings, or to induce any persons to join them. This prohibition extends to all Roman subjects holding any connection, immediate, or remote, with such Societies out of the States of the Sovereign Pontiff.

3. No one is permitted to have or retain in his possession any deeds, seals, emblems, statutes, patents, or any thing else relating to the acts of such assemblies.

4. Whoever shall know that any such Societies still continue to be held, shall be under obligation immediately to give information thereof to the Governor of Rome, the Commandants of Provinces, or the Apostolic Delegates; and they may be assured their names shall be kept inviolably secret. The penalties they may have incurred, as accomplices or adherents, shall be remitted, and they shall receive a pecuniary reward at the expense of the delinquents, whenever they can produce sufficient proof of their charges. His Holiness wishes that all should be aware that there is nothing either unbecoming or dishonourable in such denunciations, which are important equally to the interests of the Faith and the State. In consequence, every oath of an opposite nature must be considered only as a *bond of iniquity*, which leaves the contrary duty in full force.

5. The penalties against the transgressors of this Edict, according to the nature and circumstances of the offence, shall be corporal, and even very severe, including partial or even entire confiscation of property, moveable or immoveable, of which the judges and other agents of tribunals, who may have effectually contributed to the discovery and prosecution of the guilty, shall obtain a portion.



6. All the palaces, town or country houses, and buildings, in which these assemblies or lodges (as they are called) may meet, as soon as legal proof is thereof obtained, shall be confiscated, saving to proprietors who shall prove that the meetings took place without their knowledge, indemnity at the expence of the aggregate property of the offenders.

Since the above was sent to press, the following violent philippic against the Pope's Edict, and the Inquisition, has been put forth by the *Courier*:—"This odious policy in the Roman Pontiff, and the more detestable measure to which Ferdinand has had recourse in Spain of restoring the Inquisition, afford us but melancholy presages and prospects. They seem to be founded upon a principle of suspicion of the people whom these respective Potentates govern, and may tend (God send we may be disappointed) to re-produce those miseries from which Europe, by the immediate interposition of Divine Providence, has just escaped. As to the Societies of Freemasons, we thought all the nonsense of the Abbe Baurel about them had long since been consigned to 'the family vault of all the Capulets.'—We venture to assert, without the fear of contradiction, that order and good government have in no country in the world been disturbed by the Societies of Freemasons—disturbed is too cold a phrase—we will go further, and maintain that good Government and the laws are under infinite obligations to these Societies. Their doctrines are all peaceful, all benevolent—their principles are founded upon the purest Christianity—their practice, like the good Samaritan, is to bind up the wounds of the afflicted, 'to comfort and help the weak-hearted, and to raise up them that are fallen:' their device is 'Peace on earth, good will towards men.' Such are the Societies which the head of the Catholic Church thinks it necessary to religion and to morality to stigmatise and prohibit: and this is the Church whose doctrines have so fascinated many of our politicians, that they wish to engraft them upon the British Constitution. As to the restoration of the Inquisition, we are told that it had

"fallen into dissuetude before the French Revolution—and that its restoration is perfectly harmless. This is idle talk. Why restore it at all? Because those who have restored it, do not mean it should be innocuous or inactive. But these and all similar measures fail of producing that security which a short sighted policy promises itself. May those who have adopted them see their error soon, it must be soon, or the consequences may be fatal."—Softly, Mr. *Courier*—Softly, if you please. All this fine-spun declamation might have answered very well, if you had been *guiltless* of the crime of preaching up the restoration of the Holy Father to his former plenitude of power. It would have been very proper language, such as would have done you credit; what would have been perfectly consistent, had you not been found amongst the first, and the most zealous, to excite a *holy war* in favour of the Pope. Nothing would satisfy you but the overthrow of Napoleon; nothing would please you but the termination of his "odious tyranny;" and you hesitated at no means to accomplish this. Your eulogies of the Roman Pontiff, whom you affected to commiserate as "an innocent victim of the Corsican's cruelty," was one of the stratagems which you, and your detestable imitators, employed to accomplish his fall. Now that Napoleon is fallen, you begin to anticipate the consequences of this, and of your blind policy. I am not displeased that events, which any prudent man might have foreseen, are likely to excite *terror* and *alarm* where it only ought to be excited. But if you, or any of your coadjutors, expect to obtain *credit*, for *now* seeming to *disapprove* of what you formerly so strenuously *recommended*, you will find yourselves greatly mistaken. Notwithstanding your present fears, I have little doubt, if you were again placed in circumstances similar to those which led you to preach up the destruction of Napoleon, you would not only avail yourself of the aid of the Pope, but of the Devil himself, if you thought his Satanic Majesty would consent to the alliance.